

Food Stamp Facts

The food stamp program helps low-income people buy the food they need to meet their nutritional needs. Although it is a federal government program, it is run by state or local agencies. This fact-sheet explains who can get food stamps and how to apply for them.

Who Can Get Food Stamps?

To get food stamps, you and the other people in your household must meet certain conditions.

Everyone in your household must have or apply for a Social Security number, and be in one of the following categories:

- citizens or nationals of the U.S.;
- noncitizens who are lawfully admitted for permanent residence and have a total of 40 qualifying work credits;
- certain noncitizens who are lawfully admitted for permanent residence and who are active duty members or honorably discharged veterans of the U.S. armed forces, their spouses and unmarried dependent children; or
- certain American Indians who are born outside the U.S. or who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.

Certain other noncitizens may be eligible for seven years after:

- the date of admission as a refugee under section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA);
- the date granted asylum under section 208 of the INA;
- the date deportation is withheld under section 243(h) of the INA, as in effect before April 1, 1997, or the date removal has been withheld under Section 241(b)(3) of the INA;
- the date admitted as an Amerasian immigrant under section 584 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1988; or
- the date granted status as a Cuban or Haitian entrant as defined in section 501(e) of the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980.

Most able-bodied people between the ages of 18 and 60 must register for work. Many people may be required to participate in an employment and training program. Some college students also may be eligible.

Generally, your household can't have more than \$2,000 in resources. But, if your household includes a person age 60 or older, the limit is

\$3,000. Resources include cash, bank accounts and other property.

Not all resources count. For example, your home and the land it's on don't count. A car or truck counts differently, depending on how it's used. The resources of a person who is receiving SSI are not counted for food stamp purposes.

Most households also must meet an income limit after certain deductions have been subtracted. Your household may qualify for extra deductions if there is a person age 60 or older or disabled. The income limits vary by household size and may change each year.

How Can You Apply For Food Stamps?

Food stamp applications are available at any Social Security office. If you and everyone in your household are applying for, or are getting SSI payments, any Social Security office will help you fill out the food stamp application and will send it to the food stamp office.

All others must take or send the food stamp application to the local food stamp office. Or, they can take it to any Social Security office if a food stamp worker is there.

When you apply, you also should have:

- some identification that shows your name and address;
- proof of earnings or other income, such as Social Security or SSI benefits, or a pension, for each member of your household;
- proof of how much you spend for child care;
- rent receipts or proof of your mortgage payments;
- records of your utility costs; and
- medical bills for those members of your household age 60 or over, and for those who receive Social Security or SSI benefits because they are disabled.

For More Information

Contact your Social Security representative or your local food stamp office for more information about the food stamp program and the eligibility rules.

Food Stamps

Help, Information and Applications
Available at any Social Security Office

Getting or applying
only for
Social Security ?

**YOU CAN GET A
FOOD STAMP
APPLICATION
AND INFORMATION
AT ANY SOCIAL
SECURITY OFFICE.**

We cannot take food
stamp applications
from people getting or
applying only for
Social Security.

Getting or applying
for Supplemental
Security Income (SSI)?

**YOU CAN APPLY FOR
FOOD STAMPS AT ANY
SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE
IF YOU AND EVERYONE IN
YOUR HOUSEHOLD GET
OR APPLY FOR SSI.**

We will help you fill
out the food stamp
application. You do
not have to go to the
food stamp office to
apply.

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